

## Highlights

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# Monitoring Report

*A review of the B&H media published by Media Plan and the Institute for War & Peace Reporting  
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## 'THE RAVENING HOUND OF PALE'

***Oslobodjenje headline for a story of a dog biting a woman (13/8).***

'The Bloodthirsty Dog of Pale' (13/8) was how another Sarajevo daily, *Vecernje Novine* headlined the same story about a dog who bit a female (Serb) journalist in Pale. Since dogs bite people everywhere, the only interest the Sarajevo press could have felt in the story was the opportunity it offered for a good headline.

This underlines a problem for the Bosnia and Herzegovina daily press: the difficult art of headlines. Too often, journalists or editors seem tempted to make a good story out of their headline, even if there is nothing in the text to justify it. 'Human Rights Watch Accuses the SDA' (*Dnevni Avaz*, 9/8) titled a story on the Helsinki Committee's report on harassment of opposition parties - the report did not in fact accuse the SDA. *Oslobodjenje* (7/8) headline: 'The Helsinki Committee for BiH: Politics Behind the Backs of the Homeless' gave the impression of being a direct quote by the committee.

'Izetbegovic Not Permitted in Split' suggests that the president Alija Izetbegovic was physically excluded from

the city where his conference with Croatia's President Tudjman took place (*Vecernje Novine*, 5/8). 'Izetbegovic Is My President Too' (*Dnevni Avaz*, 16/8) was a coloured interpretation of Vladimir Soljic (Deputy President of the Federation)'s statement that he accepts the authority of the BiH Presidency. 'The Ring Waits for the Beast' (*Vecernje Novine* 12/8), described provisional arrangements SFOR troops have made for the event of intercepting former RS president Dr Radovan Karadzic.

'Never Again Independent' (*Dnevni Avaz*, 13/8) titled what was simply a list of independent candidates for the local elections in Zenica. 'Tuzla Takes Abdest' (meaning ritual Islamic purification rites) was an article on the need to wash the city.

*Dnevni Avaz* (12/8) wrote that Bihac businessman Fikret Abdic should not be allowed to enter party politics: 'OSCE Puts Pressure On Our Police To Guard The Posters Of The Parties Of War Criminals'. (Aside from the question of whose police are 'our' police, Abdic has

not yet been condemned as a war criminal by any court).

Commentary sometimes plays to the readership gallery. *Oslobodjenje* (6/8) wrote, on the reconstitution of the BiH embassies, of 'the diplomats that will (unfortunately) be appointed by Pale and Zagreb'.

Identification of quotes is not always satisfactory. *Oslobodjenje* used emotional quotes supposed to be from a Zdruzena Lista '97 (an opposition coalition party) meeting, without any identifiers: 'The leaders of the SDA are gathering in Tuzla and combining in order to throw down Beslagic (the local mayor), while the HDZ leaders spread themselves throughout BiH over the weekend. What do they care for threats to peace?' (5/8)

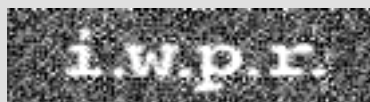
Absence of identification sometimes looks like a research failure: *Dnevni Avaz* (17/8) had a picture of one of two Bosniaks killed in the village of Laze, by local Serbs. The caption was 'One of the Two Killed' with no names or other identifiers for either of the two.

## MONITORING REPORT

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Like the electronic media (Studio 99 and TV BiH follow the same pattern in their newscasts), the Sarajevo press sometimes show an inclination to focus particularly on one political personality. This personality is, in general, co-president of the Council of Ministers, Haris Silajdzic. During the monitored period, Silajdzic was mentioned, mostly in a positive, other wise a neutral context, 16 times by *Oslobodjenje*, (ahead of even President Izetbegovic, and well ahead of his fellow co-president, Boro Bosic). *Dnevni Avaz* carried him eight times, all in a positive context, usually because quotes from his speeches were used as commentary. *Vecernje Novine* went even further - almost the only politicians to be mentioned in a positive context at all were President Alija Izetbegovic, Premier Edhem Bicakcic and Haris Silajdzic. (The exception was Vladimir Soljic, who was mentioned once, positively).

On the other hand, the Sarajevo press are willing to carry stories and headlines which allow other nationalities a point of view, or show them in a sympathetic light. *Dnevni Avaz* carried (6/8) a message about property rights from Catholic (Franciscan) Fra Petar Andjelovic, known in his pastoral region, central Bosnia, for tolerance and broad views. In the same number was a headline 'The Croats of Ozimic Protect Their Neighbours.' This was a story of how Croats in a village near Zepce, better known for serious tensions between Bosniaks and Croats, defended their Bosniak neighbours from harassment by Croat extremists.

An interesting way to assess the reputation the Sarajevo press have away from home and among non-Bosniak readers is to examine the number of times they are used for commentary and source-material, particularly by Croat media. *Slobodna Dalmacija* felt that *Vecernje Novine's* headline of 'Thin Results' (referring to the Split summit between presidents Tudjman and Izetbegovic) was more accurate than *Oslobodjenje's* slightly rosier account. Significantly, the accounts of both Sarajevo papers were cited as evidence that official (specifically SDA) optimism about the meeting was false. This suggests a tacit acknowledgement by *Slobodna Dalmacija* of the independence of at least these two members of the Sarajevo press (6/5). (Radio and Television Herceg-Bosna, and Croatia TV Mostar also quoted 'the Muslim media' on the summit.)

The Sarajevo daily press, compared with their counterparts in the Republika Srpska, or with the newscasts of the electronic media, contain a much higher proportion of genuinely investigative reporting, as opposed to news agency items. Banja Luka daily *Dnevne Nezavisne Novine* and the RS official daily *Glas Srpski*, particularly the latter, make heavy use of the RS state news agency SRNA. Moreover, neither can be called impartial: *DNN* is a strong supporter of President Biljana Plavsic, and parties who have sided with her, while *Glas Srpski* is unashamedly pro-SDS, and the Pale leadership. As regards headlines, 'Muslims Mess the Procedure' (for returns to Brcko) is a fairly typical example of a *Glas Srpski* title (8/8).

### 'NOT EVEN A DOG'S SKELETON WAS FOUND'

(*Srpska Television on the contents of the mass graves near Srebrenica*)

Srpska Radio-Television continued, in the monitored period, to use quotes by politicians to convey resentment of the international community, but returned to padding this out with its own commentary. (This grew increasingly uninhibited with the August 20 imposition of the NATO protectorate on the RS police, as *Monitoring Report's* Special Insert 'DIGGING IN THE WOUND' will show.)

One presenter in particular stood out - Marinko Ucur. He was responsible for some of the most graphic word-paintings of a world conspiracy against Serbs, and, on August 11, told viewers 'the real truth about the conduct of the Omarska and Trnopolje camps'. He had noticed, 'The figures of raped Muslim women rise from day to day, and there is no trace of ..a witness of the crimes. According to natural consequences...by now, from several tens of thousands of raped Muslim women at least half that number of children should have been born. However, such a natural rise in the birth-rate has not been recorded. The hunt for Serb crimes has also been influenced by the so-called mass graves, in which who knows how many Muslims are buried...when the ground around Srebrenica was dug, in the unsuccessful search for Muslim bodies..not even a dog's skeleton was found.'

He continued 'Like cream on the media satanization of Serbs came the formation of the International court for war crimes, in which the ratio of accused was 10 to 1, to the disadvantage of Serbs. Thanks to this lawful institution the leaders and heroes of the Serb nation Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic have become the most hounded figures in recent European history.'

Next day he was back: 'The representatives of the international community continue their pressure on the RS.. reducing its police force.. to a dependent state, in relation to the members of SFOR and IPTF... In the light of this today's visit to Banja Luka by the SFOR commander in chief Eric Shinseki, and special delegate of the UN general secretary Kai Eide, and commissioner of IPTF Manfred Sajtner, should be interpreted. RS president Biljana Plavsic received them in the City Hall.' (12/8).

And the next day: 'The representatives of international organisations.. once again, at Pale today, showed their true faces. Their statements proved that they do not respect the official institutions of the RS, nor our state, officially recognised by international agreement.. And it cannot be wondered at that the various international organisations are spending their money on mixing up directly in the internal affairs of the RS. They want to be judges in the constitutional courts, to be the chairmen of various meetings. They would like, finally, to control the state media' (13/8).

Ucur had some competition from another Srpska TV presenter, Dejana Glusac. She had her own angle on the reconstitution of the embassies: 'Understanding that the Muslims are obstructing Dayton the most... contact with the Muslim representatives in Washington and the United States has been broken off' (6/8). She added in the same newscast that 'highly placed members of SFOR and IPTF, who did not want their names mentioned, told SRNA reporters that, come peace or force, it (BiH) would be divided, referring to the renewal of armed conflicts' (6/8).

Srpska Television still displays a portrait of Radovan Karadzic prominently in almost every newscast. Its presence is usually saluted with emotive commentary. Karadzic was described, on August 9 as one of 'the two Serb heads

(the other being Ratko Mladic). The presenter issued a call 'to gather to the idea in which we moved, the unity of the Serb people.' (9/8).

Meanwhile, every night before the main newscast 'Novosti', for over a fortnight, the anti-Hague and pro-Karadzic book of Kosta Cavoski. 'The Hague Versus the Law' has been promoted.

### BRCKO BREWING

SRT Radio Studio Brcko is still refraining from commentary of its own, but the quotes to which it gives special emphasis are increasingly menacing. 'Sadly we have to fight for Brcko although it is ours.' (16/8) said the RS Women's Association. Mladen Bosic, Brcko SDS president spoke of 'classic pressure from the international community against Serbs' (8/8).

RS Army general General Vladimir Vrkes was relayed on August 11: 'Serbs in this area are surrounded by different pressures and we must fight and overcome them. The danger which lies before us is that the RS, by means of the voters lists will be drawn into a unitary BiH.'

SRT studio Brcko gave good coverage to the 'Cetnik organisation establishing itself in Brcko.' This 'chose its president and unveiled plans for a new memorial in Brcko, for which the city, said the new president, would be renowned to the end of time' (4/8).

### 54 SEVERED HEADS

None of this could rival, however, Serb Radio Doboj's diatribe (5/8) against 'Muslim Army general Sakib Mahmuljin....the only commander who had Mujahaddin units in his corps. The aforementioned units killed 54 living prisoners of Serb nationality, and sent their severed heads to Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo.'

### RTV BiH

TV BiH now has a reporter based in the RS - Sunita Sukalo, who reports from Banja Luka. Although Independent Studio 99's Radmila Karlas, has been reporting from Banja Luka from the beginning of this year, and TV INFO has

several reporters there, this is one of several new steps for TV BiH. Another step noted in the monitored period was the relaying of SDS critique - made against Federation foreign minister Jadranko Prlic, who stated that Banja Luka is of strategic interest to Croats (15/8).

Like Srpska Television and its 'Party Chronicle', TV BiH has begun to give regular 10 minute representations of political parties. Unlike the 'Party Chronicle's' presenter, TV BiH allows the party representatives to speak for themselves, and the parties come on just after the main news, instead of after the late news. Most interesting was the appearance of a party from the RS - the Party of Federalists. Its president, Dragan Djokanovic, said that he was appearing on TV BiH, although his party was not running in any Federation municipalities, as a sign of good faith, and to promote the return of trust between the entities and nations.

Impartiality was also uppermost in Senad Hadzifejzovic's report from Split on the Tudjman-Izetbegovic conference, and the TV BiH approach to the tense issue of reconstituting the embassies.

But the TV BiH account of Holbrook's meeting with the three members of the BiH presidency was handled rather oddly. The presenter commented that the protocol arrangements of the RS authorities hosting the meeting (which took place in Lukavica) were in disarray, but did not explain this was due to Holbrook's inability to get away in time from his meeting with Biljana Plavsic. (This fact was supplied by Radio Free Europe). TV BiH's reporter also informed viewers that Serb officials forbade camera recordings, without explaining that this was by previous agreement (a fact also supplied by Radio Free Europe).

In a newscast edited by Belmin Karahmedovic, commentary was mingled freely with news from Brcko that two Bosniaks, who were part of the municipal commission for assessing housing for returns had been beaten by Serbs. 'While the representatives of IPTF had gone out to breakfast, the car with the lilies (on the numberplate - i.e. the Bosniaks' car) was targeted by aggressors... Supervisor (for Brcko) Farrand and the IPTF must react with decision... This can no longer be tolerated. The rulers of Brcko must know



that the refugees, according to human and divine justice, have to return home' (5/8).

### THE MEDIA OF 'HERCEG-BOSNA'

Croatia Radio and Television Herceg-Bosna, Croatia Television Mostar, and *Slobodna Dalmacija*, all spent some time discussing the aftermath of the Jajce incident (in which local Croats expelled a large group of Bosniak returnees. All of them gave most weight to Euro MP Doris Pack's remark that she believed the incident to have been caused, in part, by Bosniak policies. *Slobodna Dalmacija* quoted her correctly, but the other media followed the lead of Croatia Television, which quoted her as having referred to 'Muslim forces' (8/8).

Radio Herceg-Bosna reporter Meri Zlatovic suggested that the Bosniaks were repeating what this medium saw as their former aggravation, by returning yet again in excessive numbers. '98 families returned, although only 80 were agreed.' Actually 99 individuals went back to villages around Jajce (16/8).

Radio Herceg-Bosna reporter Mijo Kelavic's description of the unsuccessful sitting of the BiH Council of Ministers (17/8), mingled news thickly with commentary. - 'Co-president Haris Silajdzic - visibly resigned, and with a complete lack of politico-diplomatic tact or excuses, said that he could not allow the Serb government to design the state documents and driving licences of their entity - which was fine. What was not fine', Kelavic went on to say, 'was his political terminology when he adduced...the number of *expelled* Serbs from Croatia who would adopt the documentation of the Serb entity. It is obvious that the BiH first minister was confused about the means and reasons for the Serb population's departure from the Republika Srpska. But the Serbs, remember, departed by design, and peacefully, in tractors, with Galbraith at their head, and not as Silajdzic insists on saying, in the manner of people who are being *expelled*.'

TV Herceg-Bosna was particularly emphatic in its references to 'the Community'. By this was meant the three Mostar municipalities with a Croat majority, whose combination into a single body has been declared illegal by the

Office of the High Representative. TV Herceg-Bosna persevered in using the title of 'Community in spite of warnings from the local Media Experts' Commission.

Perhaps the most unpredictable of these media is *Slobodna Dalmacija*. This was the only Croat medium to unemotionally announce the penalties, including the removal of candidates from the lists, which the OSCE sub-commission declared against the HDZ in Mostar and Zepce (16/8). The other media ignored the matter, or, in the case of TV Herceg-Bosna, used it as grounds for complaint against the OSCE.

*Slobodna Dalmacija* article 'Dayton Injustice' (9/8) stated, 'BiH Croats must accept this country as their homeland, and not as a way into some kind of Great Croatia, which is unthinkable without an apocalyptic war on the territories of both countries.' This was balanced, however by an article which complained (13/8) 'Why force peoples to live in a single state when they don't want to, and think up such a complicated civil and military structure in BiH which without several thousand NATO soldiers has no hope.'

### ESELAAM ALEJKUM, TUZLA

Edib Kravic, director of Tuzlansko-Podrinski Cantonal Television (TV TPK), appears frequently on this station in his capacity as representative of the Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH, and member of the Election Committee of its leader-member, the SDA. The Coalition's promotive meetings are always covered, and its announcements issued almost every day. Meanwhile, attacks issued by Coalition members against the local government of Tuzla Municipality (headed by Mayor Selim Beslagic, member of the coalition 'Zdruzena Lista' are carried on an almost daily basis (see August 7, 8, 10, 11, 14).

On August 6: the Coalition announced that OSCE had issued a complaint against SDP Tuzla - 'because of ..the most basic lies about the alleged intention of the Coalition to choose a resident of another municipality, i.e. Mr Izet Hadzic, as a mayor of Tuzla. The candidate for Mayor of Tuzla, Mehmed Bajric, was the most serviceable in the defence of Tuzla, and is beloved by the citizens, regardless of nationality'. TV TPK did not tell viewers exactly what the SDP had said.

On August 9 there was a very complimentary item on Mehmed Bajric, which showed him meeting with former (female) colleagues who used to work with him in the police department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There were camera shots of him presenting each woman with a rose.

TV TPK covered the Hotel Tuzla all-party conference (12/8), but did not go into particular detail - except when attacks on Mayor Selim Beslagic were the topic. TV Tuzla covered this conference more fully - and was accused by TV TPK's director Edib Kravic (13/8), in his capacity as member of the local MEC subcommission, of being propagandist and in contravention of OSCE regulations.

One of Kravic's fellow-members of the SDA Election Committee, Camil Custovic, is director and owner of Tuzla Radio Hayat. This radio was also meticulous in relaying Coalition party meetings to audiences, sometimes live. 'Tuzla Personality Meha Bajric' was quoted attacking Beslagic, and Kravic himself came on (11/8) to support his party more openly than on TV TPK. 'The basic goal of the Coalition is that the borders of BiH be as they were a thousand years ago - from Drina to Una, and from Sava to the sea... To victory! - Eslaam aleikum'.

Meanwhile, two other local radio stations have put together an informative programme called 'Reckoning the Accounts'. This gives slight priority to attacks on the Coalition. The initiators are Zlatko Berbic, brother in law of Beslagic and owner of Radio Kameleon, and Zlatko Dukic, president of the Cantonal Committee of the SDP and director of Radio Tuzla.

### ZENICA

Local Independent TV Zetel ran a detailed story on the release from prison of 2 Serb brothers (4/8) for whom the Zenica authorities had no proper documentation. TV Zenica failed to notice the incident at the time. Three days later, after the story hit the Sarajevo press, thanks to details given out at an IPTF press conference (5/8) TV Zenica carried the municipal mayor saying the authorities were not responsible - the only way in which the story emerged.

## INDEPENDENT TELEVISIONS

NTV (Independent TV) BANJA LUKA now runs a promotive jingle for the SPRS (the RS Socialist party, whose parent party - that of Slobodan Milosevic - donated the station's equipment) before and after all news programmes 'You don't have bread, you don't have money, you don't have work, you don't have medicine, but you do have the SPRS.'

Oko 22, the newscast of Independent Studio 99, is notable for being unable to say the words 'Republika Srpska'. The nearest they can get is 'the Entity with a Serb Majority', 'the territory controlled by the SDS'. While these phrases are common on all Federation media, this station alone uses them almost exclusively..

TV INFO, the newscast of the now-renamed Open Television Network is still relying heavily on foreign press conferences for impartial news. No less than five of these formed the basis for the August 8 newscast. It is also keeping rigorously to its policy of never showing party politics. Audiences who do not supplement their knowledge by watching TV BiH or Oko 22, must remain in the dark about pre-election party news.

TV INFO scheduling is not always logical - Federation agreements on the constitution of the embassies, telecommunications and the army Council-Board) took third place on the August 11 newscast. (The first item was the non-agreement over road repairs.) The same newscast carried Biljana Plavsic's accusation that the RS Ministry of Internal Affairs had not given documents to Brcko returnees, and her announcement of her own party, right at the end. 'The BiH political scene is not rich in events,' concluded the presenter.

## TROUBLE WITH MAPS

In contrast to Srpska TV, Croatia Television puts BiH Federation news in the domestic, rather than the foreign bloc. A Croatia TV programme on the religious celebrations of the Croat nation chiefly covered Siroki Brijeg, Mostar, Medjugorje, and Sarajevo, producing the impression that there are more practising Catholics in the Federation than in

Croatia. (15/8). However, according to TV BiH (6/8) the weather map showing Croatia and the Federation as a borderless monochrome whole, is due to be changed.

## REMOTE CONTROL - BIH JOURNALISTS AND THE GOVERNMENT

By Emir Imamovic

(Monitoring Report would like to introduce the second of its series of opinion articles (see last issue's 'The Media of "Herceg-Bosna"). Monitoring Report would like to point out that all opinions expressed in this column are the author's, and do not necessarily represent those of the editors.)

The citizens of former Yugoslavia were among the last in Europe to buy themselves remote-control television sets. But this apparent backwardness was not the result of low living standards, or ignorance of contemporary technology. The simple fact was, remote controls were unnecessary. This was the time of a one-party, one-media system, and the two state television channels broadcast identically stupid, ideologised programmes.

Now, after years of fragmentation, the media have, in BiH, expanded incredibly. Sadly, however, only in quantity. In Sarajevo alone there are seven TV stations, 11 radio stations, three daily papers, and numerous periodicals. The output of the TV stations, regardless of their relations to the state, is catastrophically poor. This means the government does not have to worry about organising any system of censorship, or pressurising journalists. The independent media, as they mostly call themselves, are popular, but have little influence, while journalists generally succeed in censoring themselves in a way suitable to the requirements of the regime.

The Bosniak-Croat establishment can feel secure, for quite a few of the independent stations are controlled, albeit discreetly, by the government. The SDA, for example, in varying degrees, influences Bosniak Radio Hayat, Independent Television Hayat, RTV BiH, *Dnevni Avaz* (which was founded with

government support), and the nationalist weekly *Liljan*. Croat politicians meanwhile 'have' Croat Radio Vrhbosna, and the newspaper '*Hrvatski Rijec*'.

Studio 99 is notable for independence, but its productions are, to put it mildly, bad. The programmes of the former TVIN, now OTM, the network funded by foreign donations, are among Sarajevo's more watchable television, but the newscast TV INFO is illogically structured and boring. Perhaps the best of the electronic media is Radio Zid, which constantly produces interesting, high-quality programmes.

The Sarajevo press, are a bright spot on an otherwise depressing scene, when their journalism is compared with that of the electronic media. Bi-monthly *Slobodna Bosna*, the monthly magazine *Dani*, and a few of the cultural magazines (*Odjek* and *Lica*, for example), come up to the most exacting standards of journalism. They have a wide readership - this include politicians who, secure in their power, rarely or never react to what *Slobodna Bosna* or *Dani* have to say about corruption, nepotism, and the like.

As for the dailies, *Dnevni Avaz* is the most ideologised and establishmentarian. *Oslobodjenje*, the oldest daily in BiH, is infinitely more independent, but regrettably sterile in approach and ideas. Then there is the almost-tabloid - but interesting - *Vecernje Novine*, whose continued existence is little short of a miracle. The government tried to exterminate it when bringing out *Dnevni Avaz* - which bought up most of the journalists and equipment of the older paper. *Vecernje Novine*, however, hung on.

Key to the relationship between media and the regime is that while the government continues to enjoy its incredibly strong position, journalists will continue to deal superficially with the deepest of social issues. The few professionals still active are like Don Quixote fencing with the windmill - until the government decides to punish them. The case of the satirical magazine *Polikita*, whose issues were confiscated from the vendors by the police, is a chilling reminder of the regime's power to act when it so desires.

*Emir Imamovic is a journalist of Dani.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Illegal to Jam

I would like to know what you are referring to when you speak of 'international community warnings of possible jamming.' My understanding is that jamming is illegal under international Telecommunications Union agreements. I distinctly recall that Kofi Annan, when he was in charge of UN peacekeeping operations, refused to envisage jamming the Khmer Rouge radio in Cambodia, because of its illegality under international law. I can testify, because I was directly involved, that UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor backtracked from a call to jam rebel radio in Burundi, for the same reason.

With perplexity

Ronald Koven, European  
Representative, World Press Freedom  
Committee.

TV TPK Protests (excerpt)

Among other things, your monitor gave the opinion, that 'this station used the Philharmonic Concert to promote the SDA,' and 'did not mention the name of Asim Horozic, the composer whose work was being performed for the first time in Tuzla.' I have the impression that your monitor did not follow our programme at all. In order to prevent arguments I am sending you the video and written text, and I would like to correct the untrue information which affects the reputation of our station.'

Edib Kravic, Director.

Monitoring Report replies:

*Dear Mr Kravic*

*We apologise for the mistake in the Bosnian version of our report, which did state, incorrectly, that TV TPK did not mention the name of the composer, Asim Horozic. However, even after reading the written text, we still feel that it was unusual to specifically name the president of TV TPK, Dr Sead Jamakosmanovic, who was present, but not to name the Austrian director 'specially invited to this event..under whose baton the two compositions were conducted.'*



Monitoring Report Special  
Issue:

**'DIGGING IN THE WOUND'**

(From the letter from the RS Minister of Information, on the behaviour of the international community, read out on SRT, 20/8)

On August 20 SFOR troops, with the consent of RS president Biljana Plavsic, imposed a protectorate on the Banja Luka police, taking control of the Centre of Public Security, the Police Academy, and the main Banja Luka police station. Srpska Radio-Television responded with an overflow of hate-propaganda. SFOR and IPTF were cast in the roles of an army of occupation, compared - with the help of archive footage - to the occupying Nazi forces of World War Two.

Still more sinister was the treatment of Biljana Plavsic - a demonstration of this media's skill in diminishing and blackening a target figure. Plavsic has sunk, in the past couple of months, from 'President Plavsic' through to 'Professor' and 'Mrs'. She is now 'the woman' (although all the other titles are still in use). She has been compared with a laboratory professor, treating her subjects like worms. She has been compared with Mussolini. Perhaps most offensively, her childless state and broken marriage have been used to belittle her - she is a barren woman, incapable of running her own personal life, much less a country. Bizarre reference to her advisers and supporters as 'hairstylists' dyeing her hair (i.e., by way of a local-language pun, making a fool of her) aim both to emasculate them and to mock her.

Karadzic, meanwhile, is becoming increasingly iconised, a christ-like figure, seen only in portraits. His loss to the Serb people is a 'agonising wound' which the international community, (said the RS Minister of Information) are 'digging and scraping'. He represents the integrity of the Serb nation - in contrast to Plavsic, who has betrayed her people.

*Monitoring Report* has tried to assemble below enough excerpts from

the texts of SRT's August 20 and 21 newscasts, to give an adequate picture of how this station is conducting its hate campaign. We have tried to show how the quotes of politicians, quotes from the press, quotes from (presumably) ordinary citizens, as well as the footage and commentary of the station itself, are used by presenters. They create an unequivocal image of a betrayed state, addressing its enemies in sadness, perplexity, and anger.

(It should be noted that the photomontage mentioned above, which turned SFOR into Nazis did not feature in the actual newscasts of Srpska Television, but in a music video shown immediately afterwards. However, the text of the newscasts is relevant, and is cited below).

On August 20, Srpska Television presenter Dusko Oljaca described how SFOR: "violently burst into these buildings, and all legally appointed employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were thrown out on the street, with threats. Then they enabled para-police forces (Plavsic's police) to enter the buildings. All of this was observed by a group of citizens who protested sharply."

Camera shots showed policemen leaving the Centre for Public Security, and a crowd of people protesting. The camera did not make it clear how large this group of protesters actually was. Prominent in the foreground was an elderly man who shouted, "Shame on you! We'll throw a hundred thousand eggs at the Banski Dvor (Plavsic's current residence) tonight, you whore! Three months from today Tudjman's flag (i.e. the flag of Croatia) will hang here!"

(It is interesting to note that the last time eggs were seriously thrown in the RS, they were aimed at the SRT building in Bijelina, by allies of Plavsic - see *Monitoring Report* 'Dogs of War', this series, no 2.)

An SRT reporter then interviewed Stojan Davidovic, head of police headquarters in Banja Luka: "My father fought a four-year war against the Schwabe (derogatory term for Germans). This morning a deputy Commissioner of IPTF - a German -

came here with his men. They forced me into my office, brought huge hammers and axes, burst into all offices, forced all my men out."

Next a statement by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) was read out in full. Police officials appointed by Plavsic are referred to as "alleged". They are, according to the MUP, "individuals whose biographies show a lot of dark spots... Alleged head of state security of Banja Luka. Nenad Ceranic, is... a child from a mixed marriage, whose mother is a Croat... Alleged head of Banja Luka police Milan Sutilovic is a former police chief, known as a protector of Muslims and Croats in Banja Luka, which won him the trust of the President."

Then the camera returned to presenter Oljaca: "History reminds us that Benito Mussolini used to address the people from Roman balconies just like Biljana Plavsic today." Plavsic was quoted saying: "There is no chance for this nation." Oljaca went on: "Events that brought a part of the RS and the Serbian nation to the edge of the abyss did not start last night from the balcony of Banski Dvori, but with violations of the Constitution, demagoguery, manipulation and usurpation. Let us just remind ourselves of the words Plavsic used to describe SRT... a woman who failed in her personal life to manage something very much smaller (i.e. a family) than a Serb state, which is being created in this region for the first time. And this woman sends other people's children against Serbian children."

The next item was a meeting of the Main Committee of the SDS in Banja Luka attended by President of the BiH presidency Momcilo Krajisnik, RS premier Gojko Klicovic, and other top-ranking hard-line SDS members). Above their heads, a huge photo-portrait of Karadzic was displayed on the wall. The chief item on the agenda was further attacks on Plavsic, "a woman who was never proportionate in anything."

The international community and SFOR were also accused. Presenter Oljaca backed this up with commentary: "...Pale is under complete siege by SFOR and IPTF."

Control of movement and inspection of everything that moves - from those who lecture us daily on democracy!" An SFOR vehicle on its way to the entrance of Pale, followed by a car, came on screen. Through the windscreen of the car - the pictures were being taken by SRT's camera.

Oljaca compared the situation with the time when "German occupation forces in enslaved cities of Europe distributed leaflets that said one thing, while their actions spoke of something completely different.. a leaflet produced by SFOR and IPTF appeared in Banja Luka today. In this leaflet the occupying forces of SFOR offer their vision of democracy. Such a democracy should be returned with a democracy that only ruffians can understand... it would be logical that... this nation should cancel its hospitality to these rowdies and usurpers."

Next was heard a statement by the RS government on events in Banja Luka: qualifying these as a "coup d'etat"; "obviously what we have here is an attempt at foreign occupation, carried out with support of domestic collaborators." Plavsic was a "renegade president" who "surpassed all Serbian quislings up till now." "A war has been declared on the Serb people west of the Drina, and the method of its conduct is classical: stirring up divisions within the nation itself."

For further illustration, the presenter used the local press. An article by the RS *Oslobodjenje* was read out in full: "world peacemakers who ostensibly support her (Plavsic) besiege Banski Dvori. There is no doubt that their visits are of an instructive character...(teaching her) the creation of her own government garnished with leaders of the opposition and former SDS members, whose joint goal is the destruction of state unity and autonomy under the protection of... suspicious dollars."

The article described 'A policy of blind execution of orders, issued by those who instigated the flames of war by bribery, leading to.. a unitary BiH. What kind of rights would the Serb nation have in such a quasi-state?.. The prospect of a unitary BiH is paving the way for a new exodus by Serb people.'

The article ended on a bizarre note: "Advisors (of Plavsic) are hairdressers temporarily employed in the RS. They dye the President and comb the state like a parting."

Then it was the turn of another presenter, Svetlana Pezer-Sukalo. She told viewers that the RS Minister of Information Svetlana Siljegovic had sent a letter to heads of international organizations, warning them their authority was being exceeded in "ever greater and greater" measure, at the press conferences organized on Wednesdays in Pale. (The letter was also sent to state news agency SRNA). The letter stated "SRT was accused of lying, (which was) backed by a pile of lies and fabrications. This was not only a diplomatic incident, but also a proof that the international community takes the role of a judge in matters they are one-sidedly and superficially informed about."

Siljegovic also accused the international community of "striving for censorship and their own version of the truth." She labelled as "monstrous" the "constant satanization of Doctor Karadzic, a man whose life was destroyed by unprincipled and destructive policy of the international community, whose spokespersons still dig and scratch the most painful wound inflicted on the Serbs by international politics."

The Minister felt that her task was "to protect the journalists whom these spokespersons lecture and on whom they bear down, thinking themselves to be superior". She issued what sounded like a veiled warning to independent journalists: "It is more important to be a journalist in a national medium, than to be paid to carry other people's beliefs."

The press conference which the international organisations held in Pale was carried - but the reporter put the word "alleged" in front of practically everything the "monstrous" spokespersons were talking about.

Srpska Radio, meanwhile, joined in with a will. Here are some excerpts from the newscast 'Dnevnik' at 4 pm, August 20, edited by Suzana Radjen-Todoric.

The broadcast started with the following mixture of commentary and news: "Under the excuse that terrorists are being searched for, pupils of the secondary school of the MUP were thrown out in the street.... They don't have a place to either eat or sleep... this school is a boarding school where children from all over the RS are being educated."

Reporter Velimir Bozic came on air: "Some 1.500 pupils... who were supposed to start the new school year this Monday... will have to wait in garages and kindergartens, where they sleep on floors, on the blankets provided by the RS army." "Boys aged 15 to 18 were on guard in the school.. and had gun barrels thrust into their stomachs. Instead of food in the restaurant, they now receive sandwiches in the street and sleep on blankets on the floors of kindergartens, garages, at friends'."

Some pupils were interviewed, one of them saying that he was held at gunpoint by SFOR members. Then the Director of the institution, Mladen Mandic, was interviewed: "Their sleeping quarters were taken over by some 120 SFOR soldiers who brought equipment in three trucks with them, which is a clear sign that they will stay here for a long time... Refugees from Drvar and Petrovac are especially upset, for they cannot either eat or sleep, even though they are good students."

Next the editor spoke of the "occupying forces of SFOR", with a special emphasis on the low-level flights of helicopters over Pale "only 50 to 100 metres above the settlement, upsetting the residents".

On August 21 Srpska TV's Dusko Oljaca was back, with further news.

First Momcilo Krajsnik was quoted inviting 'all workers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which Biljana Plavsic tried in a lawless and unconstitutional fashion to set up ..in the Centre for Public Security in Banja Luka.. to immediately pull out and hand over to the legal officers, whom according to our law only the Minister of Internal Affairs can appoint'. Krajsnik warned them that, "This work, carried out by force, in an unconstitutional



way..classifies you among those who are destroying the constitutional order. Nobody involved in ruining the RS will ever be amnestied.'

'We fought the war', he continued, 'in order that not one drop of Serb blood should ever be shed by Serbs, and now you ..are putting us in a situation to shoot one another.' He described Plavsic's supporters as 'Enemies of our existence'.

(Another SRT presenter,Tamara Curuvija, significantly bestowed his full title of 'Minister of Internal Affairs' on Dragan Kijac, removed from this position by Plavsic several weeks ago).

Next to be quoted was Mladen Mandic, Director of the police academy in Banja Luka, who spoke the previous day on Srpska radio - 'This is now the second day when the forces of SFOR and IPTF have occupied the Centre for Training Personnel in Banja Luka. They threw out everybody employed here, together with the pupils, so that there is absolutely no way to continue with the academic year.'

A unidentified reporter commented: "They (the pupils) did not know what war is, and it hit them the hardest.. although they are learning well".

The high point was when the editor-in-chief of Srpska Televsion, Miroslav Toholj, came on to give his comment. He remarked: "It is not surprising, this kind of behaviour by a woman who obviously regards the state as a laboratory and wants to treat people like worms." He blamed SFOR for "tolerating the terrorist attack of the para-police, and then enthroning the formerly suspended" (meaning Plavsic's police, whom Krajsnik had suspended).

He finished with some magnificent rhetoric: "Who will answer to the dead and to those who stayed alive, if the state disappears? And it will disappear, if it is divided and inserted into a community in which it knows that it almost certainly cannot function...The responsibility of one person.. may be interesting for history, but it will not be a consolation to future generations." He concluded by calling the RS, "the first Serb state to exist in this area."

Then a statement from the Ministry of Internal Affairs was read out. It referred to the entrance by Plavsic's police into the station where tapes and materials which were compiled for her eventual prosecution were being stored, and which Plavsic's police removed. The statement spoke of "abuses conducted within sight of the eavesdroppers... which provided further excuse for the attack of SFOR and IPTF" (who had entered the station when they saw what was happening).

The MUP statement insisted that the materials be handed over for public prosecution, saying that otherwise the way would be left open for manipulation of the public by Plavsic and her supporters.

Next Oljaca presented another item on the behaviour of the occupying forces: 'The helicopters of NATO, today also, at just fifty to a hundred metres above the roofs of houses, cruised over Pale. Two helicopters.. flew low over the capital of the RS, lighting up the area they flew over.' Shots of a flying helicopter were shown repeatedly. (These pictures are now shown before every newscast while the initial summary is being read out, as if they represent a symbol of the NATO 'occupation').

SRT conducted a vox pop called 'Pale Today' to find out what the residents thought of the helicopters. These were the results:

"This is occupation, guys. We must resort to taking up arms again."

"This disturbs the peace, and disturbs sleep."

"This is provocation. They want to destroy everything that was built up by blood. The Plavsic woman, as a president, has gone far too far. How come she is not ashamed?"

"We should take up our guns again" (a man whose two sons were upset by the flights)

Picking up on the Plavsic theme, foreign press articles were read out in translation. All reminded readers (and listeners) that Plavsic is a nationalist,

with whom the representatives of the international community have only just started to cooperate. Further articles raised the idea that the RS was due to be robbed of Banja Luka. (That this is a recurring theme is shown by the SDS response to a statement of Jadranko Prlic, foreign minister of the Federation, that Banja Luka is of strategic importance for Croats - see the current issue of *Monitoring Report*).

"Deputy for the High Representative, Jacques Klein, received orders from the American government to divide Banja Luka from the RS, and make it into a separate Canton, with special and direct links to Zagreb and the Federation, states the Zagreb paper 'Globus'" said the presenter (adding that this information was from the state news agency SRNA).

The main abuse, however, was reserved for Nenad Ceranic, Plavsic's new head of state security. He had given an interview to independent Banja Luka daily *Dnevne Nezavisne Novine*. In the interview he accused the SDS-loyalist police in Banja Luka of contributing to the troubles. Oljaca reacted viciously:

"It was only left for young Ceranic to put a noose round the necks of those who guarded the Krajina, and with it the RS, while baby Ceranic hung on to two grabbed flats, diving under the table whenever he heard an enemy shell."

Oljaca's final conclusion, on reading that Ceranic believed that Plavsic was in the right, was "What would his Croat Mama say?"